

the Gary Paul Kustom Kollection



by Craig Patterson

A mainstay in not just the Colorado music scene, but in the music scenes of the entire Midwest for five decades, Gary Paul has been at the forefront of every musical movement during that time.

If you've played music in Colorado, you know him. If you've seen live music in Colorado, you've enjoyed his bass, guitar, and vocal talents. From blues, to country, to rock, metal, surf, and psychedelia, no other Colorado musician has come close to his love of the road and of being on stage.

Along with that hard-earned pedigree, dozens of CDs and streaming singles and albums have cemented his place in Colorado music history. Join him in a tour of his collection of prized Kustom heads and cabinets.



The Gary Paul Kustom Kollektion

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Foreword

As a teenager, I remember the first time I saw a band with Kustom amps. I thought: one, those are cool, I want one, and two, I should try to get in that band. My father drove me to Arnold & Morgan Music Store in Garland Texas, and signed a loan with GMAC Credit, and we rolled out with a black K200 Kustom Amp. That thing was the loudest bass amp I had ever heard! A year later, I was playing in that band and we had a full stage of Kustom Gear. When the band got a van to travel to gigs, the Kustoms served double duty as amps, and they were great to sleep on during long road trips.

I heard once that Cadillacs were the American Dream Car. Sure, they were expensive, but they depreciated so fast that eventually, everyone could afford one. The same was true for Kustoms. In the 60's, 2,000 dollars was a lot of money for an amp, but they fell from favor with the advent of the Marshall Stack. In the 90's I decided I would try to buy every one I saw posted on Denver's Craigslist. I bought amps from players, barn finds, estate sales, and folks that didn't even know what they were. I found them in near perfect condition, to covered in beer stains, and gave them all a home. Thanks to Lindy Wilson, and Danny Gafford for teaching me Rock and Roll and what was cool.

-Gary Paul



Colorful oriental jackets are the trademark of The Brutes, a high school combo. Danny Gafford, Gary Dunn, David Tipps and Lindy Wilson perform "Dear Eloise" for the enthusiastic audience.

The Brutes, Gary Dunn, David Tipps and Lindy Wilson put out a heavy sound to keep the party moving.





Over the decades, Gary has played in more bands than even he can count, entertaining in almost every state. But Colorado will always be his home. In fact, most of the images in this book came from his mountain property, with some from other Colorado locales thrown in for good measure. In the shots on these two pages, we see Gary onstage with varying portions of his Kustom Kollektion, just as entertaining and functional now as when they were brand new.



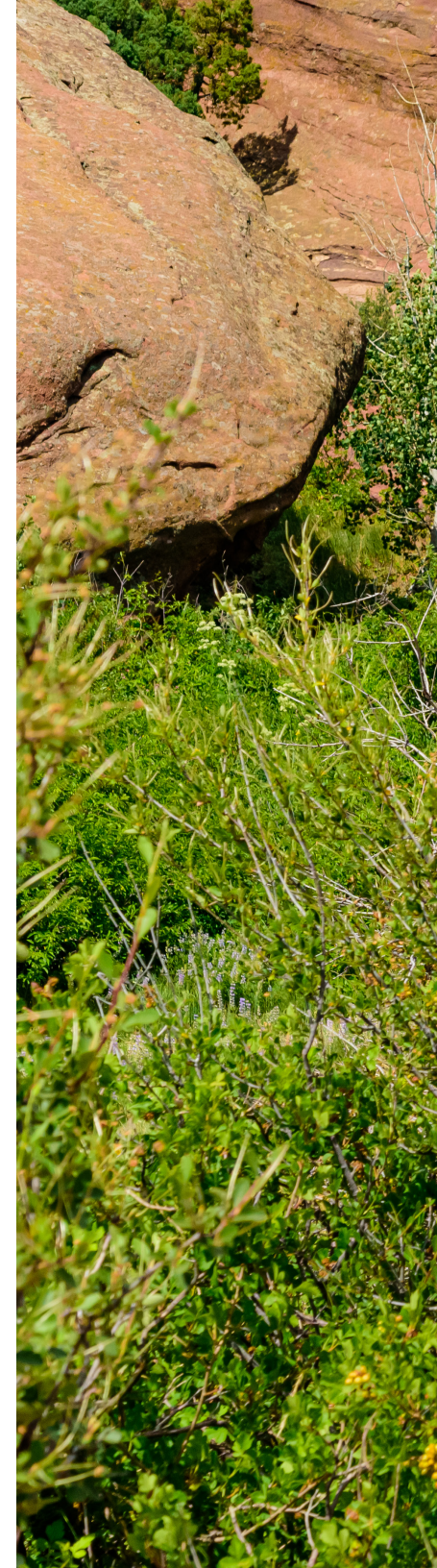


Goldie

Head: K200B-1, S/N 62416. Cabinet: 2-12 CTS

Previously owned by the Bobby Goldsboro band, this amp/head set arrived at the Gary Paul Collection with a lovely champagne gold finish on the knob center inserts of the head, as well as the ports on the cabinet. The combination of the previous ownership and the finish are what gave it its name. However, it was later discovered that these items weren't actually finished in gold, it was just caked-on smoke residue from decades of playing in casinos. There are a dozen or more cigarette burns on the top, adding to its provenance.

With the advent of the "Bright" switch, there wasn't much need for an amp with an additional "Bright" channel. Yet here we are with an example of exactly that. Ironically, this amp doesn't have quite the high end extension of serial number 19501, and has more low end overall. The "Bright" designation is for the peak at about 2KHz, which is effective all the time, and is accented further with the Bright switch.









Head: Frankie Gold, no serial.

Cabinet: 2-15 K28851, Gold, Kustom speakers

A standard guitar cabinet, this size combines the small size of a standard cabinet with the bigger sound of 15 inch speakers. On the left, the gold of the setting sun provides a welcome backdrop for the similarly-colored amp stack. Above, the overall ambiance tends to disguise the hue of this system, but it's still there.

Head: K200A-2 S/N 20789.

Cabinet: 2-15 no serial, Champagne, JBL D140

This cabinet contains the famous JBL K140D speakers, so it has a more high-fidelity sound than those with the Kustoms. The head is the standard by which all others in the collection are measured. Has a smooth, even tone, with no surprises along the way.

This finish is commonly thought of as white, though it actually contains some color, and is known as Champagne.





(Above)
Head: K100-1 S/N 25171.
Cabinet: 2-12 STS

(Right)
Head: K200A-2 S/N 20789.
Cabinet: 2-15 no serial, Champagne, STS

The head from the previous page makes another appearance in support of a more yellowish cabinet, showing the natural variations in the Naugahyde, particularly in various years.







Head: K200A-2 S/N 20789.

Cabinet: 2-15 no serial, Champagne, JBL D140

With a serial number just a few hundred away from the very first unit in the collection, this head has more features. Vibrato, tremolo and reverb use up more knob positions, displaying how the chassis design supports empty space or a full complement.

Equally at home in the dog days of an outdoor late Summer concert or the prestigious environs of Red Rocks Amphitheatre, this Kustom rig is truly an amp for all seasons.



Head: 2-15 Dark Gold Jensen, no serial.

Cabinet: K200B-1 S/N 61021



Head: K400B-1 – No Serial.

Cabinet: 3-8 and 2-12 “302 PA” S/N 49882.

Being a 4-channel head, this is often considered to be a P.A. Head, but the channel configuration, with two normal and two bright, gives an indication that it's more suited to multiple guitars and basses than vocals. It was best to use this stereo head for the stringed instruments, and a separate P.A. Setup (also Kustom, of course) for vocals alone. With that said, the cabinet is definitely designed to be full-range.







Head: K200-5 S/N 89704.

Cabinet: 2-12H Black S/N 08380283.

This is a later cabinet designed for use as a P.A speaker, so it's meant to be full-range. There are no ports on this cabinet. This was a special series made as a tribute to Johnny Cash, but of course it bears no resemblance to any amps Cash may have used. Though designed in the USA by Kustom, it's assembled in China, using all Chinese components. The tuck and roll upholstery

isn't a true roll; it's puffy, but the fabric is pulled down by sewing to give the impression of a tuck and roll. It's paired here with a true P.A. head, even though the head was manufactured more than a decade earlier. The heads made for these cabinets weren't quite as robust as the earlier Kustoms, so few of them remain in working order today.



(Left:)
K50-2 Combo S/N 79886.

(Right:)
K50-2 Combo S/N 69289.

The tiniest of all Kustoms, these two combo amps are identical in every way, except for their serial numbers. Featuring a mighty (and lonely) 12 inch speaker, there's a distinct bump in the ultra-low end. The overdrive on this amp is very square wave-based, and is more subtle than other amps – it takes a fair amount of level to get distortion.





These cute little folks are Naugas, from which Naugahyde is cruelly harvested. But let's not harp on that now. Instead, we'll just let these two ladies and one gentleman enjoy their surroundings. Whether it's relaxing in a comfy chair, looking at flowerpots, climbing trees, looking out the window at their confining fence, or playing Marco Polo out in the yard, this Nauga family is truly living life.

Originally developed by the fine folks at Naugahyde as a promotional item, Bud Ross brought a few back to the Kustom factory. Everyone went crazy over them! Meanwhile, the advertising campaign faltered, but the

fever for Naugas would only grow hotter over at the Kustom factory. Bud's wife took to making them out of scraps from the Kustom amps, and the Kustom Kats were born.

Today, originals from Kustom can be worth thousands, but Naugahyde still makes the ones you see here. The materials can't be chosen, and of course very few of them will be sparkly, but they're adorable nonetheless.





KUSTOM ROW







Head: K200B-4 S/N 32652

Cabinet: X3-15B KEI Black S/N 53908.

Another gargantuan cabinet, this came with three KEI speakers from the factory, and they're still there. One of them has been remanufactured by Kustom, and its sticker has a datestamp of June 8th, 1975. It's not clear whether this speaker was pulled out at the factory, or returned by a user for replacement under their lifetime warranty. The cabinet has two ports, but no rear vents, as is typical of this design.





Head: Frankie J-695RV Red S/N 3091
Cabinet: 3-15 KEI Red, no serial.



(Above): Cabinet: 4-10 Champagne STS S/N 11206.

Capable of doing duty as vocal support or a guitar speaker, this is the smallest cabinet in the collection, other than the combo amps. While it's refreshingly light to carry, it just can't keep up with the larger systems.





Head: K200A2 S/N 20789

Cabinet: 2G-1H 2-15 1-18x9 Champagne S/N 38611.

Part of Kustom's experiment in making their guitar systems even louder, this enclosure includes an Altec Lansing radial horn capable of easily overpowering its companion 15 inch speaker pair.



Head: K250-1 S/N 91479

Cabinet: 2G-1H 2-15 1-18x9 Champagne S/N 38611.

And this is another part of the same experiment. This system includes an actual 15 inch police siren, for unparalleled aural penetration. This might be the loudest guitar cabinet we've ever heard, predating the radial horn on the previous page.

The K250 head is later than most of the others, and includes the unique "Selectone" system, changing the frequency response of one of the channels much like a parametric EQ, but with curves pre-drawn at the factory, selectable by the user only with a three-position switch.



Head: K100 S/N 25188

Cabinet: 2-15 CTS Black no serial.

The earliest non-Frankie amp in the collection, this one was owned by jazz guitarist Ray Crawford, who pioneered a percussive technique for electric guitar, almost like bongos. This amp has no reverb or other frivolities; it was purchased purely for its tone. We can't find any contemporary mentions of him using a Kustom amp, but his name is emblazoned in big letters with a Sharpie on the inside of the chassis, as well as on the cable tie on the power cord.



Head: K200B-1 S/N 62416 "Goldie"

Cabinet: 3-12 Black KEI/Celestion S/N 23779.



Head: Frankie Black, no serial

Cabinet: 3-15B KEI black S/N 55496.







Combo: K100C-8 4-10 S/N 46962.

Quite large for a combo amp, this alarmingly light amp rounds out the combo collection. This amp was owned for many years by steel guitar legend John Macy.

Acknowledgment

Gary would like to thank John Hardman (left) and Kelly Ireland (right) for their immense contributions in hauling amps around to get the group picture. In fact, John sustained an injury that took quite a while to heal, showing his dedication to making the dream of this book come true.





Craig Patterson grew up in the mountains of Colorado, the son of an English teacher/Jazz musician, and a proofreader/secretary. He ventured out on the road as a musician and audio engineer for artists that include Don Henley, Pete Fountain, Maria Muldaur, The Temptations, The Trip Toys, President Bill Clinton, and hundreds of others.

With the collapse of the music industry early in the 21st Century, he pivoted to photography, using his father's experience as his initial guide. In the years since that switch, he has become a renowned landscape and automotive photographer, with work hanging in a dozen local galleries, as well as in collections worldwide. He has also directed two feature films, and had a small part in *Dumb and Dumber*, which he has used as a springboard to disrepute ever since.

This book is meant as a tribute to his best friend of over forty years, mentor, and compatriot of *The Road*, Gary Paul.

